

VZCZCXRO4901
PP RUEHCN RUEHGH RUEHVC
DE RUEHKO #0945/01 0980843
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 070843Z APR 08
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3211
INFO RUEHOO/CHINA POSTS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA PRIORITY 7122
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA PRIORITY 9505
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE PRIORITY 0791
RUEHKO/AMCONSUL SAPPORO PRIORITY 7718
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/USFJ PRIORITY
RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI PRIORITY 6973

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 000945

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/03/2018
TAGS: [ETRD](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [CH](#) [TW](#) [JA](#)
SUBJECT: RULING COALITION DIET MEMBERS ON CHINA, TIBET, AND
TAIWAN

TOKYO 00000945 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: China needs to increase its transparency and react calmly to the situation in Tibet, but its handling of the situation there should not be linked to the Olympics, influential ruling coalition Diet members told Embassy Tokyo over the past several days. While the Japanese Government's response to China on Tibet has been appropriate -- and Japan does not support boycotting the Olympic games -- if the turmoil continues, it will negatively impact ties, senior LDP Representative Koichi Kato and Komeito Deputy Secretary-General Akaba stated. Former LDP Secretary General

SIPDIS

Hidenao Nakagawa, however, said Japan should have taken a tougher stance in response to China's handling of Tibet. Turning to the election in Taiwan, all three Diet members said Japan's relationship with Taiwan would remain stable and that the status quo in cross-Straits relations would continue. It is unlikely Japan would permit Ma Ying-jeou to visit Japan before his inauguration, they noted.

Japan's Response to the Situation in Tibet

12. (C) Although the media has criticized Japan's reaction to the situation in Tibet as "weak-kneed," Japan's response has been appropriate, ruling coalition Komeito Deputy Secretary-General Kazuyoshi Akaba told Embassy Tokyo on March

SIPDIS

128. The Japanese Government repeatedly "strongly urged" China to be as transparent as possible when disclosing information about the situation in Tibet. Describing China's diplomatic skills as "immature," Akaba explained that China puts itself in a difficult position by repeatedly failing to disclose information to the international community.

13. (C) Akaba noted he had raised the Tibet issue during lunch with several mid-ranking diplomats at the Chinese Embassy in Tokyo. At the time, he suggested to the Chinese that they disclose more information to the international community and take steps to improve transparency to prevent countries from boycotting the Olympics. The Chinese responded that if countries wanted to boycott the Olympic Games they are "welcome to do so." Akaba was initially surprised by the Chinese diplomats' "sensitive and defensive overreaction,"

but he then realized that the Chinese are taught in school that they "liberated Tibet and saved them from all sorts of evils." Describing himself as "pro-China," Akaba noted that he thought the Dalai Lama was behind the uprising and intentionally picked "a very sensitive time" to hold demonstrations.

14. (C) Senior Liberal Democratic Party of Japan (LDP) Representative Koichi Kato -- a former MOFA China hand -- told Embassy Tokyo March 25 that the Fukuda Administration's response has been "so far, so good." However, if the situation continues or worsens, the Diet will face increased pressure to take a stronger stance which will affect Japan's relationship with China. The international community must take steps to ensure the situation in Tibet does not "politicize" the Olympics, Kato stressed. The Tibet issue is very delicate and will remain so if Chinese President Hu Jintao does not handle it very carefully. China often responds to problems by trying to suppress them, which does not resolve anything, he added.

15. (C) Former LDP Secretary General LDP representative Hidenao Nakagawa was more critical than Kato of the Japanese Government's response. Japan should have taken a tougher stance on China, Nakagawa told Embassy Tokyo on April 2. China needs to give Tibet more freedom and autonomy and must respect religious differences. That said, Nakagawa also stated that while Beijing needs to make some concessions on Tibet, it is not productive to link Tibet with the Olympics. Japan has not decided who will represent Japan at the Olympics however, he noted. (Note: Prime Minister Fukuda has said Japan should say nothing on the issue of participating in the Olympics at this point. Noting China is "making efforts" on Tibet and "considering Japan and China have such close ties," Fukuda told reporters Japan should "make a decision calmly." Taking a tougher line, the Imperial Household Agency (doubtless with with MOFA approval) announced that no Imperial Family representative will attend the Olympic Games. End note.)

TOKYO 00000945 002.2 OF 002

Taiwan Election

16. (C) Akaba stated that Japan welcomes the successful completion of Taiwan's presidential election. Ma Ying-jeou has publicly stated he would like to visit Japan before he is inaugurated but this will not be possible, Akaba stated. The Japanese government will not allow visits by Taiwan's incumbent president, or anyone who is about to be sworn in, or who has just served as president, he explained. Kato agreed that the election outcome was positive and said he thought the status-quo in cross-Straits relations would continue. Both Kato and Akaba said the majority of Taiwanese believe that strengthening economic ties with mainland China is in their best interest.

17. (C) Nakagawa agreed that Japan would not permit Ma to visit Japan before being elected. He also noted that Beijing reacted calmly to the election results and said Beijing was probably pleased with the outcome. Nakagawa reported that during a March 21-24 visit to Beijing, he told Chinese officials to consider restarting China-Taiwan dialogue which had been led by on the Chinese side by the late Wang Daohan.

Comment

18. (C) Prime Minister Fukuda and the Japanese Foreign Ministry appear to be making an effort to prevent the situation in Tibet from affecting the Beijing Olympics and President Hu Jintao's planned May visit to Japan. Nevertheless, many of Fukuda's rivals within the LDP share a strong, frequently vociferous antipathy toward China that resonates with large segments of the Japanese public. The

Prime Minister will need to balance his desire for harmonious Japan-China relations with a convincingly strong response to the Chinese crackdown on Tibetan demonstrators. The Prime Minister appears to be seeking to strike a balance between keeping Japan-PRC relations on track and ensuring Japan responds appropriately to the situation in Tibet. End Comment.
SCHIEFFER